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A

# LETTER to a FRIEND

I N

# *I T A L Y.*

K

A N D

## VERSES occasioned on Reading MONTFAUCON.

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sic fortis Etruria crevit;  
Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.

VIRG. Georg. ii.

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L O N D O N.

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IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA

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T. M. J. G. A.

L E T T E R

TO A

F R I E N D

at F L O R E N C E.

## A R G U M E N T.

Address to—Fesole enlarged by Sylla, Augustus, Antony, and Lepidus; destroyed by Tottilas; rebuilt by Charlemagne. Tuscan Astronomers. Dante and Boccacio born near the Banks of Arno. Italian Wines. Slavery, Superstition, Arts and Sciences. Seasons. Buildings. Architecture. History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts at Rome. Liberty proclaimed to the assembled States of Greece at the Isthmian Games by T. Quintius. The taking of Syracuse by Marcellus. Statues brought thence to Rome. The taking of Corinth by Mummius. Statuary and Painting introduced at Rome. A Taste for those Arts begins to be cultivated. The chief antique Statues mentioned. Architecture. The Pantheon. Tombs of Raphæl, and H. Caracci. Temples of Faustina and Janus. The Mausoleum of Augustus. The Moles Hadriani. The Baths of Diocletian. The Basilicæ of Antonine. Vespasian's Amphitheatre. The Circus Maximus. Obelisks. Trajan's and Antonine's Pillars. The Duilian Pillar. The triumphal Arches of Drusus, Germanicus, and Constantine. Mints and Medals. The Riches of antient Rome accounted for. Her Fall, and the Causes of it. The Invasion of the Goths, Vandals, Huns, Franks, and Lombards. Period of Barbarism, Dulness, and Ignorance. Revival of Poetry in Provence. Petrarch, Boiardo, Tasso, Ariosto. The Revival of Learning under the Medicis. The taking of Constantinople. The Pontificate of Leo X. Castilio, Sannazarius, Vida, Fracastorius, Bembo, Flaminius, and Naugerius. Painting restored. Raphæl, Romano, Corregio, Paul Veronese, Caracci's, Titian, Guido. Conclusion. Virgil's Tomb and Sannazarius's; Vesuvius, Sibyll's Grott.

# LETTER to a FRIEND, etc.

O THOU! whom *Italy's* fair Arts have borne  
 Far from thy native Soil, and now detain  
 In pleasing Bands, wrapt in *Florentia's* Breast:  
 Say can those Climes such winning Charms display,  
 As not to let one Wish repaſs the *Alps*, 5  
 One Thought revisit thy *Britannia's* Plains ?  
 Dwells such Delight in all the Tract around  
 The lofty Top of Parent *Fesolé*?  
 Whose Walls, by *Sylla* and *Triumvirs* grac'd,  
 A *Goth* destroy'd them, and a *Frank* restor'd. 10  
 What though the *Tuscan* Artist there can boast  
 A clearer Sky through optick Tubes beheld ;  
 Though *Arno's* lucid Streams her Valleys lave,  
 Whose Waters flak'd the Thirst of mighty Bards,  
 Of *Danté* and *Boccacio* deathless Names; 15

What

What though her Presses run with richest Juice,  
 Pour'd from each flow'ry Dale, and Vine-clad Hill ;  
 Yet Liberty thou seek'st, to grace the Scene,  
 To bid the finish'd Prospect smile around :  
 Yet Superstition's Clouds you'd chace away,  
 And burst the Chain that holds the servile Throng.

20

But yet I own *Italia's* Fields posses  
 A strong Circean Charm, a magic Force,  
 That brings a sweet *Nepenthé* on the Soul,  
 A fond Oblivion of all former Tyes :  
 Where Parent, Country, Mistress, Friend is lost.

25

Nor is this strange ; for here the softer Arts  
 Combin'd unite their Strength ; the Graces here  
 Knit Hands, and join the Dance ; a second Spring  
 Puts forth the Bud ; a second Summer warms,  
 And yellow Autumn twice unloads her Fruits ;  
 So lavish is the Bosom of the Soil.

30

Then to behold the proud, aspiring Dome,  
 Swell'd by *Fontana's* Skill ; the lofty Arch

Sprung

The

( 7 )

Sprung by *Palladian* Hands ; the Column rais'd  
By Arts *Vitruvian* ; how the just Sublime,  
The great Idea lifts and fills the Mind !

35

Ye vulgar Herd ! contracted, abject Souls !  
Whose narrow Thought, or coarse perceptive Pow'rs,  
These full and fair Proportions ne'er affect,  
Th' harmonious Concord of concentrating Lines ;  
What Joys, what Feelings, to your Breasts are lost !  
What Darkness must surround the Cells of Thought !  
Where never glows Imagination's Warmth,  
And Fancy's darting Lightnings never play.

40

To you the Sciences improv'd by *Rome*,  
(When flush'd with Conquests, and with Arts, from *Greece*)  
She came triumphant, and aloud proclaim'd,  
At the throng'd *Isthmian* Goal, to all her States,  
And Kings assembled, LIBERTY RESTOR'D.)

45

To you the *Latian* philosophic Lore,  
The Sage's Moral, and the Poet's Song,  
The Voice, which oft the noisy *Forum* still'd,

50

The

## ( 8 )

The Senate aw'd, and rul'd the Populace,  
 The Pen, which all her Victories enroll'd, 55  
 And to Eternity consign'd her Fame,  
 Delights how exquisite! — to you debarr'd.  
 The Page, the Stone, the Canvas, and the Coin,  
 Her Buildings, Statues, Paintings, where each Art  
 By slow Degrees, and long laborious Toil, 60  
 In Nature's Steps had closely travell'd on,  
 And her Designs to full Perfection brought,  
 Had now been lost, and fruitlessly deplo'red:  
 But some there were of more exalted Mold,  
 Of Thought more liberal, Genius more enlarg'd, 65  
 And finer Taste; who form'd in Nature's School,  
 Snatch'd from the Jaws of all devouring Time,  
 Or wasteful Fire, or pestilential War,  
 Of *Papal* Superstition, *Gothic* Rage,  
 The dear Remains of ev'ry shipwreck'd Art: 70  
 Rescu'd with pious Zeal from Gulphs like those  
 Each precious Fragment, and with Care preserv'd  
 The sainted Relicks — When her Gates unhing'd,

And

And *Syracusa's* batter'd Walls receiv'd  
 The great *Marcellus*, and the rushing Tide      75  
 Of *Roman* Legions shouting Victory :  
 Her Wealth, and all her Treasures, wide display'd,  
 For Use, or Ornament, or Pride design'd,  
 The happy Works of Art in peaceful Days,  
 Conquer'd the Victor — There *Praxiteles*,      80  
 And *Phidias* stood confest, a *Polyclete*,  
 A *Myro* rose in animated Stone.  
 There *Mentor*, who to ductile Gold bestow'd  
 Worth not it's own, in lasting Records shone,  
 The Goblet high-emboſſ'd, the mafſy Cup      85  
 Wrought rich with Sculpture, and th' historic Vafe  
 Surcharg'd with Heroes on it's figur'd Sides :  
 The Fresco there, by *Zeuxis*' Hand inform'd,  
 Breath'd Warmth and Life ; the rival Curtain spoke  
 Thy Fame, *Parrhasius* ! by it's easy Fall,      90  
 And Folds inimitable ; Drapery !  
 Worthy to grace thy own *Diana's* Shrine :  
 The finer Line, the softer Style of *Rhodes*

Mark'd her *Protagenes*; whose Pencil's Fame,  
 And Skill in graphic Lore, his Townsmen say'd  
 From the dread City-taking Greek *Demetrius*,  
 Who warr'd with Men, not Arts: The Charms of *Co*,  
 All in one *Venus* by *Apelles* group'd,  
 United rush upon *Marcellus'* Eye,  
 And captivate his Mind; the *Roman* turn'd  
 Apostate to the *Grecian* Arts, and led them back  
 To *Rome* triumphant — there to fix, and seize  
 The Empire of the World, to civilize  
 A rude, unpolish'd Nation, great in Arms.  
 Thee, fam'd *Marcellus!* *Mummius* imitates;  
 And with the Spoils of rifled *Corinth* fills  
 The vast *Basilicæ*, Vases, Statues, Urns,  
 And her wrought *Brass* attract the wondring Crowd.  
 The haughty *Roman* long injur'd to War,  
 To tedious Marching, Sieges, Fights, and Camps,  
 Puts off the Helmet; nor unwilling quits  
 The Shield and Spear; nor blushes to behold  
 Less dreaded Implements succeed — Those Hands  
Which

Which bore the Pike, the *Vallum*<sup>\*</sup>, and the Sword,  
The Compas, Pencil, and the Chissel seize.

115

A new Ambition rises; Schools are form'd;

And the hewn Marbles echoe all around

Th' *Æmilian Square*. One bids the flowing Curls

In waving Ringlets negligently loose

Hang amiable; another forms the Limbs

To Geometric Scale, and just Proportion,

Religiously exact; a thousand Statues

Start into Life; see! there the writhing Snakes

Twist round *Laocoön*, the Holy Priest

Raves with Excess of Pain; what Muscles brace

125

Yon Chest *Herculean*? such as when he slew

*Nemæa's Lion*, or the Mountain Boar:

There brawny *Dares* and the tough *Entellus*

Wield the crude *Cestus*, and to all around

Naked Festivity of Limbs unfold

130

In active Beauty: *Cleopatra* smiles

Proud e'en in Death, in all its Horrors fair:

\* Fert vallum et arma miles. H. O. R.

The Asp infatiate riots in her Breast  
 Luxuriant, vibrating his forky Tongue ;  
*Narcissus* pines in Stone ; and *Venus* turns  
 Unwillingly averse to hide her Charms.

See good *Aurelius* yet presides in *Rome*.  
*Apollo's* beardless Beauty, perfect Form,  
 With Grace and Gesture inexpressible,  
 And Attitude divine attracts the Eye.  
 How dyes *Meleager*? What godlike Hand  
 Inform'd *Antinous* ! Here the Sculptor's Art  
 Plays with our Passions, and commands at Will.  
 The dying Gladiator asks a Sigh.

Here Palaces and Temples rise — the Fane,  
 By great *Agrippa* built to all the Gods,  
 Rears her proud Head, and swells her ample Dome :  
 Where *Raphael's* and *Caracci's* kindred Urns  
 Demand a Tear. *Faustina's* sacred Walls  
 Succeed, and double-headed *Janus'* Gates :  
 The vast *Augustan Mausoleum* stands,

The

The *Hadrian Moles*, *Dioclesian Baths*  
 And *Antonine's immense Basilicæ*:  
*Vespasian's awful Amphitheatre*,  
 And the wide Plains included in the *Cirque*.

155

These were the Glories of *eternal Rome*,  
 These still survive her Fall, the Monuments  
 To future Times of her Magnificence,  
 Her Wealth, her Grandeur, and Imperial Rule,  
 Of Victory in Arts as well as Arms.

160

Huge *Obelisks* in *Ægypt's* Quarries hewn,  
 Dragg'd from the *Nile*, and wafted cross the Main;  
 Their Sides with sundry Characters engrav'd  
 Of mystic Meaning, *hieroglyphic Lore*,  
 Lift their tall Heads, and shoot into the Skies:  
 Two Pillars higher than the rest are rais'd,  
 To godlike *Trajan*, and wise *Antonine*;  
 A third the fam'd *Duilian Roftra* grace.

165

There *Arches* proudly bending bear the Spoils  
 Of Cities sack'd and mighty Nations thrall'd.  
 This speaks the Triumphs, which young *Drusus* earn'd,

170

For

For early Virtue fam'd, too soon cut off  
 When Life began to bloom ; the Sculpture shews  
 The *Parthian* flying with his broken Bow :  
 Another holds the Trophies of *Germanicus*, 175  
 Alike in Fame and Fate, by *Piso* slain  
 In Glory's full Career : A third sustains  
 Triumphant *Constantine*, *Maxentius* fallen,  
 And Hosts confounded at the *Milvian Bridge*.

Others a *Mint* establish — strike the *Coin* ;  
 Some in *Corinthian Copper*, some in *Gold*,  
 In *Silver*, or in *Brass* : the *Medal* swells  
 In bold Relief, and rises into Life,  
 Faithful to future Times their *Fame conveys*,  
 And in *eternal Characters* records  
 The glorious Actions of the Good and Great ;  
 An History engrav'd, an Annal stamp'd,  
 Which neither Moth, nor Rust, nor Fire, nor Time,  
 Nor Envy shall destroy ; escapes alone  
 Those Gulphs, where *Tacitus*, and *Livy* sunk. 19

Nor wonder *Rome* possess'd these Works of Art  
 In Affluence amazing, when she held  
 The Empire of the World, and could command  
 The Fortunes, Persons, and the Lives of all :  
 Then Rapine stalk'd abroad, and rifled Provinces, 195  
 And starving Nations wept their plunder'd Wealth :  
*Rome* sent her curs'd *Proconsul* Plagues around,  
 And let a *Verres* loose to scourge Mankind.

At length, like some huge Tow'r, which long had stood  
 The Winds and Storms, and batt'ring Engines rage, 200  
 Each covert Sap, or open Form of Siege ;  
 At last begirt without by hostile Troops,  
 Whether in Tortoise, Wedge, or circling Moon ;  
 Betray'd within by lurking Treachery ;  
 Push'd ev'ry Way, and press'd with mighty Force 205  
 Of Hosts combin'd, it shakes, it reels, it falls,  
 And spreads wide Ruin on the Plains beneath :  
 So falls Imperial *Rome*—her Luxury,  
 Her Sloth, and e'en the Arts by which she rose ;

Her

Her civil Rage, and wide extended Rule,  
 The slacken'd Reins of Empire, Cruelty,  
 Oppression, Rapine, Plunder through the Provinces,  
 Op'd wide her Gates, and courted in the Foe.  
 Thither the *Goth*, the *Vandal*, and the *Hun*,  
 The *Franc*, and *Lombard*, hasted to divide  
 And share her Spoils, to drive the *Muses* thence,  
 Banish each Art and Science, and o'erwhelm  
 In lazy Ignorance the sluggish World,  
 In *Gothic* Dulness, and Barbarian Night.

But when to *Gallic* Plains the Nine return'd  
 Indignant, and *Provence* sent forth her wild,  
 Fond, *Legendary* Bards, a strolling Race,  
 To rouse the sleeping Lyres of *Italy* ;  
 Then to dispel these Shades, and Northern Mists,  
*Boiardo*, *Tasso*, *Ariosto* rose,  
 And *Petrarch*, Father of her laurell'd Sons :  
 Then thy *Florentia's* *Medicean* Line,  
 Tho' sprung from simple Citizens, tho' born  
 To labour in the Commerce of the World,

Bad Europe's Kings, and haughty Monarchs blush:

230

To that illustrious House, of Tuscan Race,

To the great Medici, the Sciences,

The banish'd Arts and frightened Muses Train

Repair'd for Shelter—When grim visag'd War

Led on proud Mahomet's barbaric Host

235

To sack Byzantium; at the distant View

Of waving Standards, at the hostile Sound

Of armed Hoofs, at the shrill Trumps Alarm,

The awful Genius of old Greece, and Rome

Fled trembling; and in Cosmo's Mansions sought

240

The wish'd Asylum. There Minerva's Sons

Driv'n from their peaceful Seats, and silent Cells,

By the rude Hand of Ruffian Violence,

Found in his fostring Arms a still Retreat;

Thee! Cosmo! thee! propitious Gods restor'd

245

Exil'd by Envy and loud Faction's Voice,

To raise thy City's, and thy Country's Fame,

E'en now, by Ignorance and Rapine join'd,

Dismantled Learning had abandon'd lain:

The long collected Lore of Ages past,

250

The treasur'd Science of unnumber'd Years,  
 By martial Fury had been swept away,  
 Been lost and swallow'd in the Gulphs of War,  
 But for those timely Aids, that Hand you lent.  
 By thee the *Grecian Glory* rose again, 255  
 The *Roman Genius* at thy Call awoke,  
 Burst from its Trance, and imp'd its eagle Wings.  
 And after him in *Leo's* better Days,  
*Castalio, Sannazar, and Vida,* came  
*Flaminius, Bembo, Fracastor,* and hou, 260  
*Naugerius,* glorious Band of tuneful Bards !  
 Who wak'd the sounding String, restor'd the Fame  
 Of antient Song, and bad the Hills of *Rome*  
 Shake with the Pow'r of mighty Melody.  
 Then *Raphael's* animated Canvase glow'd, 265  
 And old *Romano* own'd his happier Touch :  
*Correggio's* Pencil soften'd into Life  
 The blended Colours; *Paulo's* Attitudes  
 The skill and Freedom of his Hand declar'd;  
*Caracci's* nervous Figures stood confess; 270  
 While

While *Titian's* Beauties ev'ry Bosom warm'd;

And *Guido's* graceful Air the Gazer struck.

But whither roves the Muse—in *Latian* Plains

O'er Hill and Dale discursive; sacred Song,

And sportive Fancy led her on too far,

275

Too long descriptive of those pleasing Scenes.

But well I ween my Friend forgives her Flights,

Forgives her Rapture, if on *Classic* Themes

She fondly dwelling pour the lengthen'd Lay:

Thou lov'st the Theme and Muse—the Subject thou

280

Couldst sing more deftly and in happier Verse;

Skill'd in the sister Arts! E'en now you tread

The *Muses* hallow'd Ground, their Haunts frequent,

Or on the Banks of *Tibur*, or of *Po*,

Straying at Ease, or where the *Liris'* Stream

285

Steals silent, or the rapid Course of *Nar*

Sulphureous falls, or smooth *Clitumnus* rolls:

Now pluck from *Virgil's* Tomb the Laurel wreath,

Weep o'er the Urn of *Sannazar*, ascend the Top

Of dread *Vesuvio*, seek the *Sibyl's* Grott,

290

And

And pass undaunted through her gloomy Caves :  
 While I, less active, breathe my native Air,  
 And in my Country's Lawns, and Woodland Shades,  
 Rove solitary ; chaunting to each Hill, and Dale,  
 That melancholy Theme, despairing Love :      295  
*Lucinda's Coldness, and her Charms my Song.*

